

## THE APPLICATION OF DRTA TECHNIQUE IN INCREASING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXT OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MTSN 2 BANDAR LAMPUNG

**Gia Arya Azzahara\*, Sudirman, Gede Eka Putrawan**

FKIP Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Soemantri Brojonegoro No. 1

*\*Corresponding author*, tel/fax: 082183825000,

email: [giaazzahara@gmail.com](mailto:giaazzahara@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The research was aimed at investigating: i) the students' improvement on reading comprehension achievement after the students were taught through DRTA technique and ii) the students' responses of the application of DRTA technique. The data were obtained from the pre-test, the post-test, and the questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using Paired Sample t-test. The result showed that there was a statistically significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension with the significant level of 0.00 ( $<0.05$ ). Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire showed that the students' responses at the application of DRTA technique were positive. The majority of the students strongly agree that they were well-motivated and indicated high interest in reading the whole texts due to the strategy of the text prediction. This suggests that DRTA technique enables the students to improve their reading achievement.

**Key words:** *reading, reading comprehension, DRTA technique, response*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti: i) peningkatan kemampuan pemahaman membaca siswa melalui penerapan teknik DRTA dan ii) respon siswa terhadap penerapan teknik DRTA. Data diperoleh dari pre-test, post-test dan kuesioner. Teknik analisis data menggunakan Paired Sample t-test. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan signifikan secara statistik pada pencapaian pemahaman membaca siswa dengan tingkat signifikan 0.00 ( $<0.05$ ). Hasil dari kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa respons siswa dalam penerapan Teknik DRTA sangat baik. Kebanyakan dari siswa tersebut sangat setuju bahwa mereka mendapatkan motivasi dan minat dalam membaca teks karena mereka diharuskan memprediksi teks itu terlebih dahulu sebelum membacanya. Bagaimanapun, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik DRTA dapat diterapkan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa.

**Kata kunci:** *membaca, pemahaman membaca, teknik DRTA, respon*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a skill which involves students' prior knowledge of the learned language and the students' understanding on written forms. It is supported by Afflerbach (2007:12) who says that reading is a dynamic and complex process that involves skills, strategies, and prior knowledge. Furthermore, it seems that the reader constructs the meaning of the text by trying to correlate the text and what he or she already knows about the words.

Reading that has an important part in teaching and learning process is a process of understanding the written text. The students not only have to understand the written symbol but they also have to comprehend the content of the text. According to Nuttal (1982: 17), the purpose of reading comprehension is a part of the process of reading comprehension, that is characterized by the process when the readers get the messages and meaning of the text they have read. Furthermore, the message or the meaning conveyed can be in the forms of information, knowledge, and even happy or sad expression messages. Moreover, in the learning process, students are expected to do extensive reading for their assignment or exam. However, there are many students who are not able to comprehend their lesson and improve their reading achievement. Thus, the difficulties in comprehending the text have been the main problem that has to be overcome.

Furthermore, reading is important in the curriculum of junior high school. The purposes of teaching English in Curriculum 2013, the teachers have to grow awareness of the importance of English as a foreign language to become a major tool of learning. In reading aspect, the competence that should be mastered by the students is in understanding the various meanings (interpersonal, ideational, textual) in a variety of written texts interactional and monologue especially in the forms of descriptive, narrative, spoof/recount, procedures. Contrastly, according to the writers' experience during a field practice program in SMP N 3 Negeri Agung and a pre-observation at MTSN 2 Bandar Lampung, several problems were also found. One of them was the students' difficulty in comprehending a text.

Concerning those statements above, teachers should find a way to succeed the teaching-learning process. A suitable technique is needed to keep the students' motivation to read the whole part of the text and increase their reading comprehension. Therefore, Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is one of the techniques that is expected to be a good answer for the teacher to increase the students' reading comprehension especially in narrative text. Almasi (2003:141) stated that the goal for using the directed reading thinking activity is to foster students' independence when reading. It engages students in an active process where they must use their reasoning abilities and their own ideas. This technique gives the opportunity for the students to work alone and also in a group by making and verifying the predictions. It also requires students to use their background knowledge to set purposes for reading and develop their questioning ability. Verifying predictions while reading extend thoughts and promotes interactive learning. The power of the directed reading thinking activity strategy increases

when the teacher guides students to check their predictions after reading (Allen, 2004:56).

DRTA as an effective way to improve students' reading comprehension has been previously studied through a longitudinal study by Stauffer, et. al., (1976:168) found that DRTA participants made statistically significant higher achievement gains in reading comprehension and word study on the Stanford Achievement Test in first and second grade when compared to the control group. Two studies which were primarily interested in newer techniques, found secondarily, that DRTA was effective in promoting students' reading comprehension. However, they explain that Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique is beneficial to improve students' reading comprehension.

In addition, Kusumawardani (2012) conducted her research in SMA N 1 Klirong. The result of her research proved that there is significant improvement students' achievement in reading comprehension after being taught through DRTA technique. In addition, based on the result of questionnaire most of the students gave positive responses, and the result of questionnaire is 60.06% of students chose "strongly agree", 33.5% of students chose "agree" in teaching learning process using DRTA technique, 4.48% of the students chose "doubtful", and 1.56% of students chose "disagree" in teaching learning using DRTA technique. Thus, teachers can consider DRTA technique to improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

According to the background above, those previous researches prove that Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) could be implemented in teaching reading for senior high school. Thus, the researcher applied DRTA technique in teaching reading for another level of education, which is junior high school. Therefore, this present research was conducted at MTSN 2 Bandar Lampung. The research was aimed at investigating significant improvement on students' reading comprehension achievement after they are taught through DRTA technique and students' responses through the application of the technique.

## **METHOD**

This research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative study. This research was conducted at the second grade of MTSN 2 Bandar Lampung academic year 2017/2018; also, the samples of this research were VIII A as the experimental class and VIII B as the try out class. The data were collected through a pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire.

One group pretest posttest design was used by this research. It means that the students were given pretest (T1) before the treatments and in the end, a posttest (T2) was conducted. This research was conducted in eight meetings: try out test, pretest, first treatment, second treatment, third treatment, fourth treatment, posttest, and questionnaire.

In order to meet the content validity, the researcher used a narrative type of texts which was based on the School Based Curriculum. In addition, to judge whether

the construct validity was good or not, the researcher made a table of specification. Moreover, after the researcher analyzed the data, it was showed that the reliability of half test ( $r_{xy}$ ) was 0.98 and the reliability of the whole test ( $r_k$ ) was 0.989. It could be stated that the test had a very high reliability since the criteria range of the very high reliability was (0.90 – 1.000) (Hatch and Farhady, 1982:247).

On the other hand, in order to meet the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher arranged the questionnaire aspects based on Gaither's theory on how teachers ask questions for a variety of purposes. The result of this questionnaire were used to support the quantitative data. Furthermore, to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was 0.95. It could be stated that the test had a very high reliability since the criteria was the higher the alpha, the more reliable the questionnaire is (0.7-1.000) (Nunally, 1987).

## RESULT

The results of the pretest and the posttest are showed in table 1 below. The table shows the improvement of students' reading achievement after they are taught through DRTA technique.

Table 1. shows that there is a significant improvement of the students' comprehension achievement and there is an improvement pattern of the groups which improved almost twice of its previous score. This kind of improvement do not happen in all groups; thus, we also have to take a look at the table of students' score in the pretest and posttest to get more details.

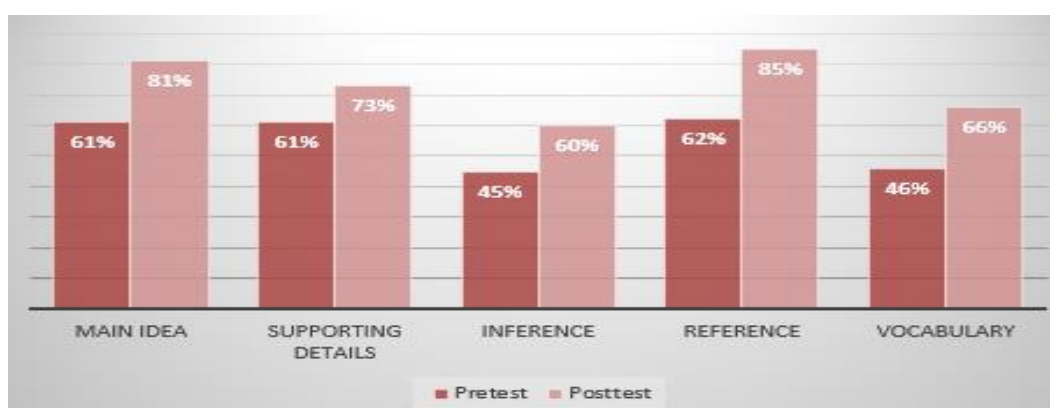
**Table 1. Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement in the Pretest and the Posttest**

No	Students' scores	Pretest		Students' scores	Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
1	41-50	7	23.3	41-50	-	-
2	51-60	10	33.4	51-60	1	3.3
3	61-70	12	40	61-70	14	46.7
4	71-80	1	3.3	71-80	12	40
5	81-90	-	-	81-90	3	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

From table 1, it can be seen that there are seven students at the range of 41–50 in the pretest. Contrastly, there is no student who get score at the range of 41–50 in the posttest. Meanwhile, the second group have ten students at the range 51–60 in the pretest and there is only one students who gets score at the range 51–60 in the posttest. Then, the third group have twelve students at the range 61–70 in the pretest; and there are fourteen students at the range 61–70 in the posttest. Furthermore, the fourth group only have one student who get score at the range 71–80 in the pretest; surprisingly, there are twelve students who get score at the

range 71-80 in the posttest. In addition, the last group which have not student at the range 81-90 in the pretest, and there are three students who get score at the range 81-90 in the posttest. In short, it shows that there was a significant improvement of the students reading comprehension and the tendency that the low achieving students had better improvement than high achievement students after the application of DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) technique. The mean score improved from 58.97 in the pretetst to 71.53 in the posttest. Moreover this technique improved the students' reading comprehension achievement in all aspects of reading. It can be seen in the graph 1 below.

Graph 1 indicates that Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique improved the students' reading comprehension achievement in all aspects of reading, such as main idea (20% improvement), supporting details (12% improvement), reference (23% improvement), inference (15% improvement), and vocabulary (20% improvement).



**Graph 1. The Improvement of Reading Aspects**

Furthermore, it can be seen from graph 1 that Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique improves the students' reading comprehension achievement in reference aspect the most, in which the students' comprehension achievement in that aspect was 23% improvement. Since through the three-step of Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique, the students would have opportunities to work alone and also in group. In the learning process, when the students' have to read a blank paragraph individually and share it with their group, in addition when they play a game, they can make a habit for finding a reference. In addition, in the learning process, the students could improve their reference by doing the tasks.

**Table 2. The Significant Difference between the Pretest and the Posttest Score**

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	12.56667	3.27670	.59824	13.79021	11.34313	21.006	29	.000

Meanwhile, table 2 shows that the significant level is lower than 0.05 and it can be concluded that there is improvement of the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Furthermore, based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, it was found that most students like English subject and their interest increased after being taught by DRTA technique. Also, they are more motivated to predict a reading text. 90% students strongly agree. Furthermore, it showed that can build their critical thinking, 86% students strongly agree about that. Then, they have prior knowledge to understand the content of the text. Almost 84% students strongly agree that DRTA technique is a good technique to improve their understanding in reading comprehension.

## DISCUSSION

The result of this research showed a statistically significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension achievement in the pretest and the posttest. The improvement could be seen by comparing the mean scores between the pretest (58.97) and the posttest (71.53). It means that the first hypothesis was accepted. It is also proved that DRTA technique contributed in improving students' reading comprehension achievement.

This technique improved students' reading comprehension through activating background knowledge and making prediction related to the reading text in the pre teaching of this technique. It gave the students a chance to correlate their prior knowledge with the reading materials that they would learn. By implementing this technique students' participation during the teaching and learning activities was increased.

The students which were asked to predict the story was the same with the students who were asked the main idea implicitly. it is in line with Brown (2001:176) who states that the students could take the main point because prediction is able to activate the schemata of the students. Besides that, the questions that came from the researcher also improved their aspects of reading implicitly. For example: Why the bear catches the rabbit? Who is he? and so on. In addition, the tasks such as filling the blank paragraph. In this activity, the students had to guess something which was not noticed in the text. The researcher gave a paragraph and let the students read. After that, they answered the questions in line with the text that had been read. The students used their mind logically, because they did not get the answer directly from the text. The researcher gave a paragraph and from the paragraph the researcher gave a question. The students should answer the question by logical reason. The students should give their opinion one by one. The researcher taught how to be a critical reader. It is supported by Latulippe (1986) who stated that readers guess to fill in gaps as they read and infer the information that was not made explicit by the writer. To do this, readers draw on their background knowledge as well as the words on the page, make and test hypotheses about what the writer probably intends to convey. In addition, the researcher also provided of reading games. The games which were given to the students were still related to five aspects. They could enjoy to learn by playing.

The findings confirmed the results of research that were conducted by Stauffer, et. al., (1976:168), Kusumawardani (2012), Somadayo (2013), Zakiyah (2015). All of them proved that DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) Technique was effective to improve students' reading comprehension. This technique could help the students' comprehension of the text by predicting before reading each section and verifying their predictions. It is in line with Allen (2004:56) who stated that the power of the directed reading thinking activity strategy increases when the teacher guides students to check their predictions after reading. Thus, based on the explanation above, it could be concluded that the first research finding supported the previous researchers who stated there was a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement after they were taught through Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique.

The second finding of this research was the result of questionnaire about the responses of the students toward the application of DRTA technique. It was found that most students like English subject and their interest increased after being taught by DRTA technique. Also, they were more motivated to predict a reading text. 90% students strongly agreed. Furthermore, it showed that can build their critical thinking, 86% students strongly agree about that. Then, they had prior knowledge to understand the content of the text. Almost 84% students strongly agree that DRTA technique is a good technique to improve their understanding in reading comprehension.

It showed that the students have good responses toward DRTA technique. Almost all of them strongly agree with those statements which state DRTA can help the students in comprehending a narrative text. In addition, DRTA technique was able to activate their schemata and the process of teaching learning became

more enjoyable and active. Furthermore, the result of the questionnaire was in line with the result of the post test. The students gained a better score after being taught by using DRTA technique, and they also considered the technique as a good thing based on their answer from the questionnaire. they strongly agree that DRTA technique can increase their motivation or interest, develop critical thinking, and improve their reading comprehension.

Those findings were supported by the previous research which was done by Kusumawardani (2012). In her findings, most of the students gave positive responses, and the result of questionnaire is 60.06% of students chose “strongly agree”, 33.5% of students chose “agree” in teaching learning process using DRTA technique, 4.48% of the students chose “doubtful”, and 1.56% of students chose “disagree” in teaching learning using DRTA technique.

In brief, it can be concluded that DRTA Technique can be a good stimulus of teaching to increase students’ reading comprehension achievement. The results show a positive impact on students’ reading achievement..

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Referring to the discussion of the research findings, the implementation of DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) technique could improve students’ reading comprehension achievement especially in narrative text reading. It can be seen from the gain of the students’ mean scores in the pretest and the posttest (69.78 to 71.54). Besides, after being taught by using Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique, the students’ score of reference aspect increased the most. In addition, the students’ responses toward the application of DRTA technique were positive. Almost the students strongly agree that they had more motivation and interest to read the whole the texts because they had a chance to predict the text first.

Referring to the conclusions above, the researcher would like to recommend some suggestions as follows:

### **Suggestions for English Teachers**

1. English teachers are suggested to implement DRTA technique as an alternative technique in teaching narrative text reading since it can help students in comprehending the text more easily.
2. In teaching reading through DRTA technique, the teachers should be able to fully manage the condition of the class during sharing session for verifying their prediction in order to make the group discussion more conducive.



### Suggestions for Further Researchers

1. Further researchers can apply this technique for different levels of students; i.e. for university level.
2. In this research, the researcher administered questionnaires in order to know the responses of students through the application of DRTA technique. Thus, for further research it is suggested to add another method of data collection, for example, observation sheet in order to find out students' constraints during the application of DRTA technique.

### REFERENCES

- Afflerbach, P. 2007. Understanding and using reading assessment K-12. University of Maryland: College Park.
- Allen, J. 2004. Tools for teaching content literacy. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Almasi, J. 2003. Teaching strategic processes in reading. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hatch, E. M., & Farhady, H. 1982. Research design and statistics for applied linguistics. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.
- Kusumawardani, I. 2012. The implementation of DRTA method to improve students' reading comprehension ability of the 11th grade science 3 at SMAN 1 Klirongin the academic year of 2012/2013. Purworejo: Muhamadiyah University.
- Latulippe, 1986. Developing academic reading skill. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Nunnally, J. C. 1978. Psychometrics and psychology. London, United Kingdom: Academic Press.
- Nuttall, C. 1982. Teaching reading skills in foreign language. London: Heinemann Education Books.
- Stauffer, R. G. 1975. Directing the reading-thinking process. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

- Stauffer, R. G., Hammond, W. D., Oehlkers, W. J., & Houseman, A. 1976. Effectiveness of a language-arts and basic reader approach to first grade reading instruction-extended into sixth grade. In R. G. Stauffer (Ed.), *Action research in L. E. A. instructional procedures* (pp. 166-203). Newark, DE: University of Delaware.
- Somadayo, S. 2013. The effect of learning model DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) towards students' reading comprehension ability seeing from their reading interest. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Zakiah. 2015. The improvement of students' reading achievement after being taught through DRTA technique at SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung. Bandar Lampung. Lampung University.